

F O A T N O T E S



NEWSLETTER

October
2001

FYI ~ There are now 258 active KDF sites throughout Alaska. The total accounts for 188 communities and villages listed:

Nanwalek	Sand Point	Unalaska
Delta Junction	Nenana Akhiok	Eagle Village
North Pole	Eagle City	Pelican
Kasaan	Skagway	Kalskag
Nome	Ninilchik	Shungnak
Fairbanks	Wrangell	King Salmon
Northway	Soldotna	Angoon
Fairbanks	Kivalina	Galena
Old Harbor	Naknek	Aniak
Whittier	Anchor Point	Akutan
Ester	Eagle River	Kiana
Karluk	Noorvik	Noatak
Sitka	Salcha	Anchorage
Willow	Ewok	Amber
King Cove	Klawock	Ouzinkie
St. Paul	Barrow	False Pass
Susitna	Klukwan	Palmer
Sterling	Bethel	Fort Yukon
Kobuk	Big Lake	Palmer
Game Creek	Tetlin	Kodiak
Clear AS	Talkeetna	Kenai
Kokhanok	Buckland	Valdez
Chignik Lake	Ruby	Hydaburg
Seward	Petersburg	Tanacross
McGrath	Glennallen	Togiak
Jackolof Bay	Kotzebue	Pilot Point
Healy	Tatitlik	Chuathbaluk
Craig	Chatanika	Chugiak
Hoonah	Tok	Cordova
Mentasta	Port Lions	Deering
Kaslif	Nikiski	Manley
Seldovia	Newhalen	Larson Bay
Point Hope	Trapper Creek	Dry Creek
Community	Hot Springs	Port Alsworth
Dutch Harbor	Port Protection	Halibut Cove
White Water	Cooper Landing	Thorne Bay
Juneau	Selawik	Anderson
Naknek	Point Lay	Homer
		Wasilla

Who We Are And How We Support KDF:

Seventeenth Coast Guard District, primarily through Sue Hargis, promotes safe boating 110% of the time. The Coast Guard prints and distributes the loaner board signs, and purchases PFDs for sites when funds are available. Sue can be reached at (907) 463-2297 or by email shargis@cgalaska.uscg.mil

State Office of Boating Safety, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, through Jeff Johnson, is busy working to implement the provisions of the Boating Safety Act, effective July 1, 2000. Alaskans pay a federal tax on marine fuel that supports boating safety in the state. Portions of these funds go toward purchasing PFDs for KDF sites. Visit the website for the Office of Boating Safety: www.alaskaboatingsafety.org

Alaska SAFE KIDS Coalitions actively promotes and maintains KDF sites in communities around Alaska. Homer Safe Kids was one of the original founders of KDF. For more information about Alaska SAFE KIDS, contact Gordon Glaser at 907-269-3433 or Peggy Hayashi at (907) 261-3194.

Community Health and EMS (CHEMS)/Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program, Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, primarily through Maria Bailey and Martha Moore, provide administrative support to KDF. We compile a master list of KDF sites, try to increase communication between sites through this newsletter and post Injury Prevention related information on our webpage at: www.chems.alaska.gov/ems_injury_prevention.htm.

We all purchase PFDs for sites when funds are available. Contact us at the email below or at (907) 465-4170.

EMAIL US: KDF@health.state.ak.us

PFD WEAR RATE STUDY



During the 2001 boating season, two Juneau observers sat watching the harbors, boat launches, and lakeshores from afar. From the crack of dawn or 'til the setting of the sun (if, of course, the sun was out to be seen), the observers had a duty . . . and that duty was to watch, and only watch, to see if boaters were wearing their Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs).

Upon arrival at their chosen locations, the observers had to go through a series of preparations. First, they had to find a comfortable spot to secure a clear view of the location. Then they had to set up their scientific and practical equipment: a water gauge to check water temperature; an air thermometer to check air temperature; a radio for wind speed and weather conditions; and clipboards full of survey forms.

The survey forms asked for information such as: weather conditions; type of boat; number of people aboard; genders and ages; and, what it looked for the purpose of the boating trip, fishing, leisure, etc.

The surveys were done in four-hour sittings. After enduring sporadic weather changes, the lack of restroom facilities, the suspicious looks of bystanders and boaters, the paranoia of possible bear encounters, and the cans of "OFF" rattling at their feet, the intrepid observers returned to their office to tally up the results.

Six observation sessions were conducted in five different locations. 188 boats were observed, with 315 operators and passengers on board. Of those:

69% of adults were not wearing a PFD
62% of children were not wearing a PFD

PFD wear rate surveys were also conducted in Homer, Deep Creek/Ninilchik, and on the Kenai River, with a total of approximately 1400 boat occupant observations. Results are still being tallied, but initial indications show an overall PFD wear rate of about 23%. The next newsletter will cover the full results! We hope to be able to obtain an initial baseline of overall PFD wear rates, gender differences, age differences, and impact of having loaner PFDs available.

The USCG provided the protocol guide for the Personal Flotation Device observation study. This guide was used by the Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program staff, Alaska Park Rangers, and other observers.

Call 465-4170 to obtain a copy of the survey protocol and to join the fun for the 2002 season!

PROTECT YOUR PFDS IN THE WINTER!!

The winter season is upon us! It brings with it heavy rains, snow, and ice. Although boating activities take place year-around in some Alaska locations, be sure to take some efforts to make your Kids Don't Float site ready for winter!

1. If your loaner site isn't used in the winter, remove the PFDs and store them in a dry (preferably heated) location.
2. If your loaner site is used year around, check the PFDs regularly. Be sure they have a ventilated storage container to keep them from the heavy weather and from molding in damp, cold conditions.
3. Pay attention to the fact that PFDs are certain to blow off open-air racks in heavy winter storms, and could even cause unnecessary search and rescue cases if found floating on the surface of the water.
4. When you take PFDs in for the winter, check their condition. Discard any PFDs that are damaged or unsuitable for future use, and request replacements through the KDF contacts or community resources if needed.

5. Mark any PFDs that are in good condition and have been donated to your site.
6. Take a moment to think about your site, and if any changes on your end or our end would make it better, and let us know! It's great if we can help you, and/or if you can help others with the quality of sites around Alaska.



FACT: *Drowning* is the second leading cause of accidental death for children and teens in Alaska.

Hypothermia is a killer in Alaska's waters.

Without a PFD, the victim slips underwater as soon as they are exhausted or become unconscious.

With a PFD, survival time climbs, depending on the type of PFD, because even an unconscious victim is not under the surface.

Remember: It only takes a second for a child to disappear, and sometimes less than a minute to drown in cold water. Let's promote 'cause KIDS DON'T FLOAT!

Kids Don't Float
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